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UNPO

Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

PROPOSAL FOR A CAMPAIGN FOR BISHOP BELLO'S NOBEL PRIZE

Bishop Bello of East Timor has been nominated, for the second time, for the Nobel Peace Prize. Besides the fact that the Bishop deserves such a prize for the courage he has shown and for his efforts to free the people of East Timor through peaceful means, the award of the Nobel Prize would raise the profile of the question of East Timor to an entirely new level. There are undeniable similarities in the situation of the East Timor cause today and that of Tibet before the Dalai Lama received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989. The Tibetan cause received a tremendous boost as a result of the prize: a boost which permanently changed the international profile and perceived legitimacy of the issue. East Timor needs just such a boost at this time.

Experience shows that obtaining a nomination for the Nobel Prize is only a first step in a process towards winning the prize. Usually prizes are only given to nominees who have received nominations for a number of years, and well organised but discreet international campaigns to support candidates have been effective.

Proposal

Without delay a strategy to develop appropriate support for the candidature of Bishop Bello must be developed. Such a campaign could last up to two or three years, but is likely to be successful if done properly. It must be implemented from a central point which will take full responsibility for the campaign's organization and co-ordination.

The Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO), of which East Timor is a member, is prepared to take on this responsibility. UNPO and its international Secretariat has the capability to do the necessary work in the appropriate manner. It has credibility and a good name. Thus, for example UNPO was nominated in 1993 for the Nobel Peace Prize by the 1967 Nobel Laureate Ms. Maguire, and has been nominated twice for the Swedish "Right Livelihood Award" (the "alternate Nobel Prize"). The General Secretary of UNPO, Dr. Michael van Walt van Praag, is willing to take the responsibility for supervising the project. This is important because Dr. van Walt was deeply involved in the campaign for the Nobel Prize for the Dalai Lama, and because he has a very extensive network of contacts (including former Nobel Laureates) who could be helpful in efforts for Bishop Bello.

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At the same time, it must be realised that UNPO simply does not have the financial means to conduct the campaign proposed here. For UNPO to take on this responsibility would mean it should assign a good staff member to this project and pay for his or her time. UNPO would also incur high telephone and fax expenses and some travel costs. Thus funds will have to be raised before the campaign can be properly started.

Plan of Action

1. Hold a one-day strategy meeting of the key people in this matter. These could include Jose Ramos-Horta, an official of the Portuguese government, a Swedish Member of Parliament, and Michael van Walt. At this "brain-storming" meeting a strategy would be decided on for one or two years.

2. UNPO appoints a co-ordinator for the campaign to work under direct supervision and with the help of Dr. van Walt.

3. Preparation of good information materials about Bishop Bello and the East Timor struggle in ways to promote support for the Nobel Prize.

4. Development of a press strategy to influence the perception of Bishop Bello's role and the profile of the East Timor issue.

5. Contacting persons who know Bishop Bello and who can write testimonies in his support; contacting a number of former Nobel Laureates for support; then contacting expanding concentric circles of influential persons who qualify, under the Nobel Committee's rules, for making nominations and recommendations.

6. Maintaining contact with persons close to the Nobel Committee in Norway, in order to try to assess the situation as the process develops.

This whole process must happen in a discreet low-profile way. Personal contacts are the most effective. They take time.

Budget in US $	1994
Salary/stipends	16,000
Communications (fax, telephone, postage)	4,000
Computer equipment (one terminal)	800
Travel	2,000
Administrative/overhead	2,500
Miscellaneous	500
Total Budget	25,800

The Budget assumes that work needs to be done until the end of 1994. Should Bishop Bello receive the prize, much work will have to be done prior to the December award ceremony. Should he not be awarded the prize, then from October a new campaign will have to start. Each year the chances improve considerably. A budget for 1995 will be drawn up after October 1994, when the 1994 Laureate will have been announced and when a realistic assessment of the costs of a new campaign can be made. This will be done on the basis of the experience of the work which will have been done in 1994, some of which will not have to be repeated.